Delay in issuing passports

†426. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that much time is taken in issuing new passports and it even goes beyond the maximum time limit of five weeks;

(b) if so, the number of cases where it took more than five weeks and the percentage of such cases, out of the total passport issued; and

(c) whether Government have held any officer responsible for taking more than five weeks time in issuing passports, if so, the passport office-wise details of the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) Passports are normally issued within a period of 4 to 5 weeks. However, in certain cases there have been instances of delay beyond the stipulated period. These are mainly due to non-receipt/incomplete or adverse Police Reports, furnishing of false/incomplete material information by the applicant, delayed supply of passport booklets by India Security Press, Nasik and are thus beyond the control of the passport issuing authorities.

Indian fishermen in Pakistan jails

427. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of Indian fishermen are languishing in Pakistan jails;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there are any bilateral agreement with the neighbouring countries to facilitate the safe handing over of such persons;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if not, whether Government would initiate such bilateral agreements; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.